

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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DEPT PASS TREASURY FOR PARSKY AND NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION

E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, MASS, MCAP, EAID, BEXP, SA, US

SUBJ: DOMESTIC SATELLITE FOR SAUDI ARABIA

REF : A. JIDDA 5297; B. TUNIS 7645

BEGIN SUMMARY: ARAB TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION'S INABILITY
TO MAKE DECISION ON ALL-ARAB SATELLITE MAKES URGENT NEED
FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO IMMEDIATELY MOVE ON PERSUASIVE SALES
PROGRAM TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR DOMESTIC SATELLITE. THIS IS
OBVIOUSLY NEEDED SHORTCUT TO ALL-COUNTRY CAPABILITY BOTH
FOR MILITARY AND CIVILAIN USE. EMBASSY REQUESTS IMMEDIATE
ACTION. END SUMMARY.

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1. REF B INDICATES THAT ONCE AGAIN THE ARAB TELECOMMUN-

ICATION UNION HAS BEEN UNABLE TO MAKE A DECISION EVEN ON WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH AN ARAB SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. DESPITE HEAVY LOBBYING BY U.S. AND OTHER FIRMS, THE SATELLITE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT GOING TO BE AN ALL-ARAB ONE IN ANY EARLY PERIOD OF TIME. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE HAVE BEEN PREDICTING. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH HUGHES, FAIRCHILD, AND OTHER U.S. SUPPLIERS. THE OBVIOUS NEED FOR SAUDI ARABIAN ALL-COUNTRY COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE AND THE ADVANCED NATURE OF OUR OWN ABILITY TO SUPPLY SUCH A SYSTEM LEADS US ONCE AGAIN TO URGE THE DEPT TO ORGANIZE IF NECESSARY A CONSORTIUM APPROACH TO PROVIDING A DOMESTIC SATELLITE TO SAUDI ARABIA WITH BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CAPABILITIES. THE EXTENT OF THE TERRITORY TO BE COVERED AND THE NEED TO REACH TO ALL POINTS OF THE PENINSULA AND THE FRINGES OF SAUDI ARABIA'S BORDERS MAKES A SATELLITE AN OBVIOUS CHOICE. FAIRCHILD AND OTHER COMPANIES HAVE ATTEMPTED TO SELL A SATELLITE FOR SAUDI ARABIA, BUT NO COORDINATED SALES APPROACH INVOLVING SALES, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, AND MOST IMPORTANT TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTED.

3. WE URGE THE USDOC AND NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AS A PART OF THE SCI/TECH WORKING GROUP OF THE U.S. SAUDI ECONOMIC COMMISSION, AND DOD TO COORDINATE AN APPROACH URGING ALL COMPANIES IN THE U.S. CAPABLE OF DESIGNING AND SELLING SUCH A SATELLITE TO THE SAUDIS TO BEGIN WORK ON THIS NOW. HUGHES PARTICULARLY SHOULD BE TOLD THAT THEIR ATTEMPT TO SELL AN ALL-ARAB SATELLITE WILL NOT BE PREJUDICED BY AN EFFORT TO SELL A SATELLITE HERE. WHAT WOULD BE IDEAL IS A CONSORTIUM APPROACH BY AMERICAN COMPANIES CAPABLE OF NOT ONLY PUTTING THE SATELLITE UP BUT OF OFFERING SOFTWARE AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF OPERATION, TOGETHER WITH TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL OPERATING GROUND SATELLITE RECEIVING STATIONS AND PROVISION OF SOFTWARE.

4. EMBASSY STANDS READY TO COORDINATE ANY SALES APPROACH BY COMPANIES IN THIS FIELD IN PART UTILIZING THE INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY THE EXCELLENT PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT SENT BY THE U.S./SAUDI ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMISSION. WE GIVE A HIGH PRIORITY TO THIS AND NOTE THAT THE RECENT MILITARY SURVEY OF SAUDI ARABIA BY DOD INDICATED THAT IF A SAG CIVILIAN SATELLITE WERE TO BE CHOSEN, THE MILITARY WOULD FIND USEFUL A PORTION OF IT. A SINGLE U.S. CONSORTIUM APPROACH WOULD BE BEST, BUT WE WOULD WELCOME ANY COORDINATED SALES PITCH BY AMERICAN COMPANIES CAPABLE OF PUTTING UP A SATELLITE AND OFFERING THE SAUDIS THE NECESSARY TELECOMMUNICATIONS EXPERTISE TO OPERATE SUCH A SYSTEM COUNTRY-

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